

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why can't I speak directly to a person in the Medical Division to ask questions about my Amplifying Information (AI) letter?

The letter you received was written with the expressed intent for you to take to your medical practitioner who can explain the tests that have been requested. The evaluator that has requested information is requesting information based on information that your medical practitioner documented on your physical exam. If your medical practitioner has questions regarding the letter or the standards by which your physical is being evaluated against, please provide the name, phone number/ and or email address; and the best time to contact him/ her and one of our medical evaluators will contact them. The medical division receives phone calls and emails through our call center 1-888-I-ASK NMC (427-5662) or you can visit our customer service center at <http://www.uscg.mil/nmc/micc/default.asp>.

2. Why does the NMC request information or testing that my doctor says I do not need?

The information we have requested is based on current policy and guidelines established to assist our medical evaluators with determining your fitness for duty. While your medical practitioner may feel that you are healthy and further tests are not indicated as it pertains to your general health, the National Maritime Center must show based on the information documented on your physical that you do not pose a risk to maritime safety. Without the information requested, we will not have the information required to complete the evaluation of your physical. This can significantly delay the processing of your application will increase the amount of time before you may receive your credential. If your medical practitioner has questions regarding the letter or the standards by which your physical is being evaluated against, please provide the name, phone number/ and or email address; and the best time to contact him/ her and one of our medical evaluators will contact them.

3. I just received a letter that states I have been denied by the Medical Division. What does that mean?

If you received a letter that states you are not medically qualified you have the following options:

First Option: In accordance with 46 CFR 1.03-40, you may request reconsideration of this decision. Your request for reconsideration should address any possible errors, provide new facts or information and/or provide extenuating circumstances in order to mitigate the decision. The request for reconsideration must be made in writing and postmarked no later than 30 days after the date of this letter. Your request for reconsideration will be reviewed and you will then be notified that the NMC has either: (1) reversed/modified the initial decision, or, (2) upheld the decision to deny your application. If you disagree with the reconsideration decision, then you may make a formal appeal to the Director of Prevention Policy (CG54) at Coast Guard Headquarters, within 30 days of the date of the reconsideration letter. Please send the request for reconsideration to this office at the following address:

**Medical Evaluations Division
United States Coast Guard
National Maritime Center
100 Forbes Drive
Martinsburg, WV 25404
Fax: (304) 433-3407**

While a request for reconsideration is pending, the original decision or action remains in effect, unless otherwise stated. Failure to submit a formal request for reconsideration in accordance with these procedures and time limits will result in the decision or action becoming final agency action. It is recommended you retain copies of all material you send with any request for reconsideration. Please attach a copy of the letter you received to any documentation you provide us in response to this notification.

Second Option: Apply for a Document of Continuity by submitting a separate application via a CG Regional Examination Center and return your credential with the application in accordance with 46 CDR 10.227 (e). Documents of continuity do not expire and are issued solely to maintain an individual's eligibility to renew once qualified.

4. How do I know if the information I submitted was sufficient?

A thorough review will be conducted on the information you have provided and if it is determined that more information is still needed, you will be contacted as soon as that decision is made.

5. There is no space on the form for my physician to provide their License Number, Address, and phone number. Can I submit an application to the NMC without this information?

The new CG-719K form has errors that were identified early on; unfortunately the change to the form will take months. In the interim, it is important to advise your medical practitioner to provide their license number, address, and phone number on the CG 719K on the last page of the physical. Without this information, processing of the physical will be delayed until we can obtain it.

6. What happens if I decline to sign the release statement in Section II if the 719K?

If an applicant decides to decline to sign the release authorization, they do so with the understanding that may result in a risk of prolonging the time to process their application. Without that authorization, requests for Amplifying Information, Missing Information, or discussions with their physician would not be allowed and that would prevent the physical from being processed.

7. What is administrative hold?

When medical is awaiting the receipt of information from a mariner the application is placed in the Awaiting Information State. While the application is in that state no forward progress is being made; the application is not forwarded to the next step in the credentialing process. It basically sits on a shelf until the information is received. Thus, it is in an administrative hold.

8. What is a medical waiver letter?

In order for the NMC Medical Division to make a fitness for duty determination, the applicant's physical examination is evaluated against the Coast Guard's standards for fitness. In the course of reviewing the physical many illnesses (past or present), injuries (past or present), and medications (active prescriptions) are thoroughly evaluated. When any of these conditions are deemed not a significant risk to maritime safety, a medical waiver is granted for that item as acknowledgement of our review of that condition. Additionally we instruct the mariner that any significant change in their medical condition must be reported to the NMC as soon as possible or that waiver becomes invalid. The waiver is a positive endorsement of the condition that requires monitoring for the length of the mariner's license. Mariners should carry a copy of their waiver letter with them whenever they are operating under the credential.

9. I answered "YES" to several of the blocks on page 5 of the CG-719K when I completed my physical exam. However, I received a letter a couple of weeks later that stated I need to answer the questions in greater detail. Is there a guide of how I am supposed to answer those questions? Should my Doctor know how to answer the questions I marked yes?

At the bottom of page 4 of the CG-719K there are instructions for the medical practitioner completing the CG 719K of how to document the answers marked "YES". Additionally, the CG 719 K job aid located on our website provides specific guidance for medical practitioners on how to properly fill out the entire physical exam form.

10. What is Reconsideration?

A reconsideration is the right of any applicant that has been denied because of medical reasons to provide new additional information if it may potentially prove their fitness for duty. A detailed explanation of the reconsideration process can be found on any letter of denial.

11. What is an Appeal?

If an applicant has been denied, has then requested reconsideration and that subsequent request denied; the applicant can have their entire case reviewed by U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters for final agency action. A detailed explanation of the appeal process can be found on any reconsideration denial letter.

12. What if the physician, that had treated a condition that is no longer an issue, has since passed away and I am unable to get my old medical records? What options do I have?

Your new physician can reevaluate the condition to provide the information that the NMC is requesting.

13. How far back do I have to go when providing my medical history?

The NMC only expects you to go back as far as you can remember, and can provide documentation for any pertinent information that may require further explanation. Childhood ailments like acne, mumps, chicken-pox, or adolescent asthma are not required to be listed; unless you are still being treated for those conditions.

14. If the Additional Information that was sent did not complete the request, why have I not received a new AI letter?

You will only receive an AI letter if additional information is needed. If the NMC does not obtain all the necessary information listed in our first request; a second letter will be mailed.

15. I was denied due to my poor exercise capacity. I work on a small boat and don't have to walk far to handle any emergencies. Why am I being denied because I can't walk for 8 minutes?

The medical standards by which you are evaluated are tied to your credential and not the size of the vessel that you operate. There are only two physical examinations currently accepted by the NMC; the CG 719K and the CG 719 K/E.

16. If my treating provider declares on my CG-719K physical examination report or consultation reports that I am cleared for duty with no restrictions, why do I still need to obtain medical studies as requested by the NMC?

From time to time the NMC will receive a physical in which the treating provider will indicate that a mariner is cleared without any restrictions, however there will be no supporting documents to verify that statement. As a regulatory agency we are required to trust, but verify all information during the medical evaluation. When items are discovered that require further information (testing, records, etc), we are required to request those items for verification. If a medical provider ever has a questions as to what information should be submitted with any physical examination, they can contact us at 1-888-I-ASK NMC (427-5662).

17. Will my medical waiver have any impact on my current job or when I am applying for a job?

In order for the NMC Medical Division to make a fitness for duty determination, the applicant's physical examination is evaluated against the Coast Guard's standards for fitness. In the course of reviewing the CG-719K and the physical, many illnesses (past or present), injuries (past or present), and medications (active prescriptions) are thoroughly evaluated. When any of these conditions are deemed not a significant risk to maritime safety a medical waiver is granted for that item as acknowledgement of our review of that condition. Additionally we instruct the mariner that any significant change in their medical condition must be reported to the NMC as soon as possible or that waiver becomes invalid. The waiver is a positive endorsement of the condition that requires monitoring for the length of the mariner's license. Therefore, it should not impact your current job or any job you would be applying for.

18. If I was granted my Merchant Mariner Credential previously with the same medical conditions/medications noted, why I am now being asked for additional information or being held up for these same conditions/medications?

Regulations and policies change as medical standards of care change. What may have been acceptable in the past may no longer be acceptable as the regulations and policies catch up with new medical standards of care.